(ख) क्या इन मामलों को निपटाने के लिए गठित समिति ने अपना प्रतिवेदन अब प्रस्तुत कर दिया है;

(क) यदि हां, तो कब और उसका ब्यौरा क्या है;
(ख) यदि हां, तो कब और उसका ब्यौरा क्या है;
(ग) यदि नहीं, तो उसके क्या कारण है; और

(ड़) क्या प्रतिवेदन प्रस्तुत किए जाने के संबंध में उक्त समिति के लिए कोई तिथि निर्धारित कर दी गई है?

कल्याण मंत्री (श्री बलवन्त सिंह रामूवालिया) : (क) अनुसूचित जनजातियों की सूचियों में शामिल करने के लिए पिछले अनेक वर्षो में प्राप्त लगभग 700 दावे लम्बित है। जहां तक अनुसूचित क्षेत्रों के रुप में क्षेत्रों की घोषणा का संबंध है, इस बारे में हिमाचल प्रदेश का ट्रांस-गिरी (गिरिपार) क्षेत्र का केवल एक मामला है।

(ग) से (ड़) अनुसूचित जाति तथा अनुसूचित जनजाति की सूचियों के संशोधन से संबंधित विभिन्न मुद्दों की जांच के लिए गठित सलाहकार समिति अपना कार्य पूर्ण नहीं कर सकी और यह अब अस्तित्व में नहीं है।

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Deferring the Implementation of New PDS

868. SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have deferred the implementation of the revised Public Distribution System till June, 1997;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Centre has already earmarked over 60 lakh tonnes of foodgrains for the purposes of revised Public Distribution System; and

(d) total number of people to the benefited and the expenditure to be incurred by Government if the said revised Public Distribution System is implemented?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a), (b) and (d) No, Sir. A Statement on the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) has been made in the Rajya Sabha on 24.2.1997 and copies of the detailed guidelines issued in this regard have also been laid on the table of the House. As per the guidelines, the state Governments/UT Administrations are required to identify the beneficiaries who live Below the Poverty Line, based on the provisional estimates arrived at by the Planning Commission for the year 1993-94 adopting the methodology of "Expert Group on Estimation of Proportion and Number of Poor" constituted by the Planning Commission under the Chairmanship of Late Prof. Lakdawala. According to this estimate, the number of Below Poverty Line population works out to 32.03 crores, which forms 35.97% of the total population in the country.

Based on the guidelines, the State Governments/UT Administrations have been asked to identify the beneficiaries Below Poverty Line, issue special ration cards to them and make all arrangements for delivery of foodgrains to the beneficiaries in a satisfactory and transparent manner. As soon as a State/UT completes this exercise, it can start deriving the benefits under the targeted PDS. The Scheme of Targeted PDS will, however, become effective throughout the country from 1st June, 1997.

(c) It is estimated that about 180 lakh tonnes of foodgrains will be issued to States/UTs under the revised/Targeted Public Distribution System.

Objections of Government of Kerala to New Public Distribution System

869. SHRI M.A. BABY: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Kerala has any reservation on the proposed PDS scheme for the people below poverty line;

(b) if so, the main objections; and

(c) the response of the Central Government to the same?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES,

CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Hike in Wheat Prices

870. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADK: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the price of wheat meant for sale in the open market has been considerably hiked by Govemment recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether this measures will not affect those people who are living below the poverty line and also increase their number considerably as most of the poor people are not having ration cards and depend more or less on wheat being sold in the open market?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (b) The open sale of wheat is undertaken by the Govemment through Food Corporation of India, as and when considered necessary, in order to exert healthy influence on the open market prices of wheat without jeopardising Public Distribution System. Keeping in view the wide gap in the market prices vis-a-vis open sale prices notified by the Govemment, to neutralise the freight element paid by Food Corporation of India in moving wheat from procuring areas to consuming areas and to reduce the subsidy burden in the open sale and to discourage the traders from making undue profit, the Govemment decided to increase the open sale prices of wheat with effect from 4.2.1997. The prices are now in the range of Rs. 4900/- per MT in Chandigarh to Rs. 7900/- per MT in Thiruvananthpuram.

(c) No Sir, the Public Distribution System is being streamlined with its focus on the poor who shall be issued foodgrains at specially subsidised price as per the guidelines issued for the Targeted Public Distribution System. The State Governments are required to identify the beneficiaries who live below the poverty line, issue special ration cards to them and make all arrangements for delivery of foodgrains to the beneficiaries in a satisfactory and transparent manner.

Vacant Posts of Members in Consumer . Fora Resulting in Accumulation of Pendings Cases

871. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be, pleased to state:

(a) the number of consumer fora in the country, State-wise,, set up during the last two years;

(b) whether it is a fact that the posts of members are lying vacant in such fora all across the country resulting into accumulation of pending cases;

(c) if so, the details available in this regard in respect of States of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and

(d) the number of pending cases State-wise so far?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF, CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (d) The details regarding the State-wise total number of consumer fora set up since inception along with the total number of pending cases are given in the enclosed statement. *(See below).*

(b) As per the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 the responsibility for appointing the members in District Fora, rests with the State Governments. Accordingly States/UTs appoint members as and when vacancies arise.

Piling up of cases in consumer courts occur not only due to vacant posts of members but also due to a number of other reasons like frequent adjournments, lack of proper infrastructure facilities at the courts etc.

(c) As per the information furnished by the Govemment of Uttar Pradesh, out of 9 District Fora set up during last two years, 5 District Fora are yet to begin functioning as the post of